



Weekly wrap up

Friday, September 16, 2005

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FOR NOW, A NEW RATE

TO: Fiscal Officers
FROM: Jack Hill, Director
Policy Development, Division of Accounts
Department of Finance & Administration
DATE: September 13, 2005
SUBJECT: Temporary Mileage Reimbursement Rate Increase

Commissioner Goetz has approved an increase to the State's mileage reimbursement rate to **\$00.46**. This is a temporary increase effective September 19, 2005 through December 31, 2005.

This memo constitutes "official" notification to your department, so please inform appropriate administrative staff within your department.

Katrina, continued

Because we had so few children needing our help reuniting with their parents following the Katrina evacuation, we have discontinued the page on our Internet site that Brian Brown promptly set up just for that purpose.

Happily, the only child who was posted there, a 15-year-old boy from Louisiana, has reconnected with his family. He had been sent to Chattanooga without them.

Meantime, our offices in the East and Knox regions have been swamped with hundreds of inquiries from people interested in becoming foster parents. Even if we don't

need them to care for young Katrina evacuees, we need them nevertheless. So, DCS has found a way to compress the required PATH training in such a way that if the home studies and background checks come up clean, we can get dozens of new foster parents to work with us within a few short weeks.

Many volunteer as foster parents (WVLT-TV Knoxville)

As we anticipate the evacuees' arrival in Knoxville one thing is certain: The victims' needs will be far-reaching and long lasting. That's particularly true of Hurricane Katrina's youngest victims. Many are now without parents, or any family. The phones at Holston Home for Children Ministries, and organizations like it, have been ringing off the hook, since Katrina hit. "We are just overwhelmed with folks who are looking for a way to be helpful in this situation," says Bradley Williams, from Holston Home for Children. Folks like Wendy Tate, already a foster parent and mother of two, now making room for one more.

<http://www.volunteertv.com/Global/story.asp?S=3825756&nav=4QcleJGg>

WATCH WHERE YOU STEP

Several years ago, while walking down the streets of La Ceiba, Honduras, I watched with amazement as local folks were rushing past homeless individuals that were residing on the streets of this small village town. I found myself to be very critical and opinionated of those individuals that appeared to be blind to the needs of the homeless.

Perhaps they had just become so accustomed to seeing the homeless on their streets, that they felt no compassion in their hearts. As soon as I had those judgmental thoughts, a Higher Power reminded me "*who have you stepped over lately?*"

A few weeks ago, as I watched in shock and astonishment at the sites of stranded people in New Orleans, I found myself once again becoming judgmental and opinionated. It just seemed easier to point the finger of blame at someone else, than to personally get involved. I soon found some satisfaction in writing checks to organizations offering their assistance to the victims of the Gulf Coast.

A week later, one of my colleagues, Bobbie Evans, mentioned to me that she had begun contacting the local motels and hotels in Jackson, Tennessee, to see if there were any victims that had sought shelter on their own. She told me about a large family of 36 that she had met on a Saturday afternoon, and how she and her friends from her church had delivered school supplies, food, and clothing to this large family in order to assist them in enrolling their children into the local school system.

I knew then that I had to go and personally meet this wonderful family. How humbling it was to actually “see first hand” how important FAMILY was to them. They told me that when the order was given to evacuate, that they rushed to get in touch with every family member in their small town, and spread the word, to “load up and leave” before the Hurricane came. Mr. Cole explained that he “could always start over with material things, but that the family was the most precious asset they had.” Days later they learned that everything they had worked for and owned was under water, and a total loss. But rather than despair, they became even more determined to persevere. Mrs. Cole shared that she had never taken anything from anyone in her whole life, and that she had always been the one helping others. I reminded her that it was her turn to allow others the opportunity to minister to her and her family.

As of this writing, this family plans on moving into seven apartments within a week. And, thanks to the generosity of a community, their homes will soon be filled with furniture, furnishings, and laughter once again.

I hope none of us forget how easy it is to “step over, or step past” those in need around us. Maybe you have not met any evacuees from the Gulf Coast that you can help, but every one of us has opportunities each day to reach out to others. Whether it is to a child, a parent, a co-worker, neighbor, stranger, or even a family member, everyone has needs. The challenge before us is to stop long enough out of our busy lives, to **SEE the need and MEET the need.**

After all, none of us want others stepping over us!

-- **Debbie Childress**, Licensure Consultant
Office of the Inspector General

All Free But the Food

The first ever Community Awareness Festival sponsored by the Dyersburg Cluster of the NW Region will be held Saturday, September 17, at the Dyersburg Fairgrounds. This event came about as a result of the Juvenile Justice CQI team looking at ways to keep their probation children out of state custody. One of the barriers they identified was the lack of appropriate opportunities for their probationers to complete the required community service ordered by the court.

Another barrier they identified was the lack of knowledge of the probationers and their families about services available in the community – services that could possibly keep the children out of state custody. Thus was born the idea of the Community Awareness Festival - which has now mushroomed from a small idea into an ever-growing event with, seemingly, a life of its own! There are four counties involved – Lake, Dyer, Obion, and Crockett – community support has been tremendous, as has staff support. Everyone is truly working together for the success of children, families, and community.

This festival has three primary purposes: to educate the public about DCS – who we are and what we do; to showcase the services available to children and their families in the four counties in which we work; and to recruit resource parents.

A secondary purpose is to get contributions to our foster children's Santa for All Seasons Fund. Our primary partners are the Dyersburg Exchange Club which paid the 150.00 fee for the use of the fairgrounds and amphitheater, and the 230th Area Support Group of the TN National Guard which has provided us with the use of their armory, kitchen facilities, and tables and chairs for our booths, as well as providing us with the 25 feet rock climbing wall and popcorn and Sno Cones.

There is no admission charge and just about everything is free except the food. We did not have to spend any money on this festival except for the \$150.00 fee for the fairgrounds/amphitheater – and the Dyersburg Exchange Club paid this for us. This whole festival is made possible by the generosity of the people in Lake, Dyer, Crockett, and Obion counties.

-- Dimple Dudley

Healthy in Hawkins

The Northeast Region participated in a recruitment effort at the first Children's Health Fair that was held in Church Hill, TN on Saturday, September 10, 2005. This event was an effort to educate the parents of children in Hawkins County on the health and development of children from infancy to middle school age. Several agencies were represented giving demonstrations and screenings on how to maintain good health for children.

We would like to thank Pam Mayo for coordinating the event and also those who participated in the event which included: Jalana Clingan, Court Liaison; Rebecca Fletcher, HCCM; Christina Butler, Foster Parent Support & Recruitment; and Christi Vaughn, Foster Parent Support & Recruitment.

-- Christi Vaughn